

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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### Human rights abuses in France: Response needed at EU level

(Brussels Wednesday 6 April, 2005) Serious human rights abuses in one EU Member State should be of concern to the EU as whole, Amnesty International said today on the release of its report detailing police brutality in France over the past decade.

Amnesty International's report: "*France: The Search For Justice*" was launched at a press conference in Paris this morning. (report available on <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>). Amnesty International has written to the current President of the EU Council Jean-Claude Juncker calling on the Luxembourg Presidency to work towards developing a system of accountability at EU level for human rights abuses within the EU.

Amnesty International's report says French police are using excessive and sometimes lethal force against suspects of Arab and African origin without fear of serious repercussions. It concludes that there is a pattern of effective impunity with regard to the misconduct of police officers in France.

"The commitment of the European Union to the promotion of human rights will remain flawed as long as there is no adequate accountability at EU level for serious human rights violations occurring within EU borders," the Director of Amnesty International's EU Office in Brussels, Dick Oosting said.

"The incidents of human rights abuses by French police outlined in this report fit into a pattern already documented by Amnesty International in previous reports on police brutality in a number of EU countries including Germany, Spain and Greece," he said. "These types of abuses effectively contravene the founding principles of the European Union and reflect badly on the credibility of the EU's human rights policies abroad."

Amnesty International believes the EU should, as a matter of urgency, empower the proposed new EU Fundamental Rights Agency to identify weaknesses in Member States' justice systems and recommend remedial action within an EU framework.

It also calls on the Council of Ministers to respond without delay to the Commission's proposals - published more than 18 months ago - on how to put into practice the principles outlined in Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union relating to situations where an EU Member State is in serious and persistent breach of the founding principles of the EU.

For the text of Amnesty International's letter to Jean-Claude Juncker: <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>

#### For further comment/background and interviews:

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